

Period 5: 1844-1877

AP United States History

Manifest Destiny and Expansion

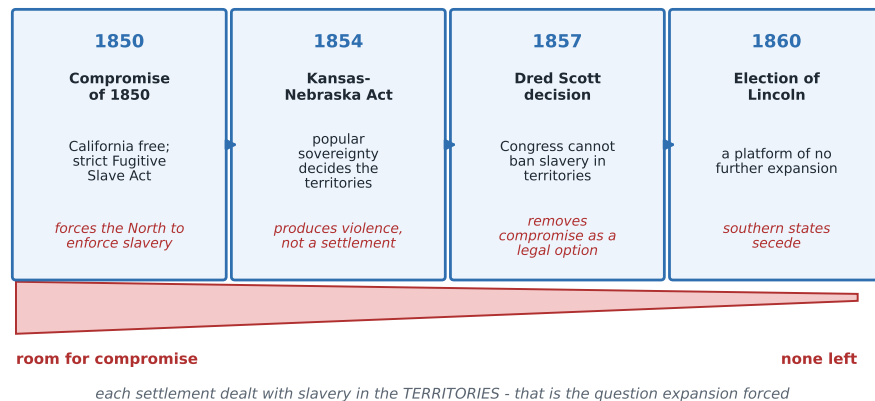
Period 5 runs from **1844** to **1877**. It is the period in which the argument over slavery stops being political and becomes military.

Expansion is the trigger. The desire for access to **natural and mineral resources** 自然与矿产资源, and the hope of settlers for land, pushed Americans west. Advocates justified annexation through **Manifest Destiny** 天命命运论 - the claim that the United States was destined, and superior enough, to spread across the continent.

The **Mexican-American War** 美墨战争 added enormous territory in the West. Later, wartime legislation such as the **Homestead Act** 宅地法 boosted migration further, and interest in expanding trade produced economic and diplomatic initiatives abroad.

Expansion also meant conflict. The government's interaction with **Mexican Americans** 墨西哥裔美国人 and **American Indians** produced dispossession, resistance, and new legal disputes over land and citizenship.

Why Expansion Broke the Political System



Each compromise dealt with slavery in the territories, and each collapse left less room for the next one

Acquiring land forced a question that could not be avoided: **would slavery expand into the new territories?** Every attempt to answer it produced a temporary settlement that then failed.

- The **Compromise of 1850** 1850 年妥协案 admitted California as free and included a strict **Fugitive Slave Act** 逃奴法, which enraged the North by requiring its citizens to participate in enforcement.
- **Popular sovereignty** 人民主权原则 - letting territorial settlers decide - produced violence in Kansas rather than a settlement.
- The **Dred Scott decision** 德雷德·斯科特案 held that Congress could not ban slavery in the territories, removing compromise as a legal option.

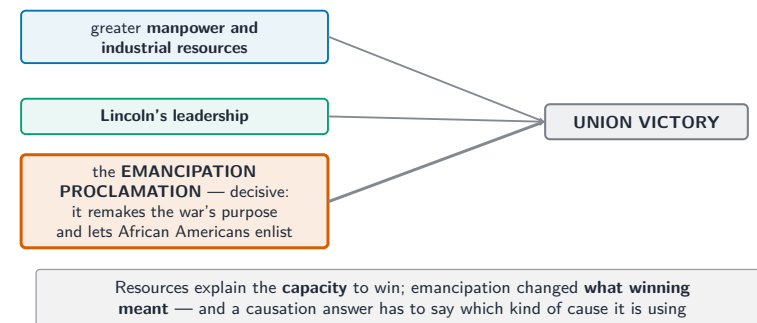
Ideological and economic differences produced **diverging responses** 分歧的回应 to slavery, from abolitionism to proslavery arguments defending it as a positive good. By the 1850s slavery dominated political discussion, destroying the existing party system and producing the new **Republican Party** 共和党.

Secession and the Civil War

The **election of 1860** 1860 年大选 brought **Abraham Lincoln** 林肯 to power on a platform of preventing slavery's expansion. Southern states responded by **seceding** 脱离联邦, and the war followed.

The Union won because of **greater manpower and industrial resources**, Lincoln's leadership, and, decisively, the **Emancipation Proclamation** 解放黑奴宣言, which turned the war into a war against slavery and enabled the enlistment of African American soldiers.

Government policy changed on both sides during the war: conscription, taxation, and an expanded federal role in the economy. African Americans' service and the actions of enslaved people who freed themselves by reaching Union lines shaped the outcome as well.



Reconstruction

Reconstruction 重建时期 attempted to settle three questions: the status of the freedpeople, the terms of readmission for the southern states, and the balance of power between the states and the federal government.

The constitutional achievement is the **Reconstruction Amendments** 重建修正案:

- The **13th Amendment** 第十三修正案 abolished slavery.
- The **14th Amendment** 第十四修正案 granted citizenship and equal protection.
- The **15th Amendment** 第十五修正案 prohibited denial of the vote on grounds of race.

The **women's rights movement** was both **emboldened and divided** 既受鼓舞又出现分裂 by the 14th and 15th Amendments, because they extended rights on the basis of race while introducing the word "male" into the Constitution.

Radical and moderate Republicans 激进派与温和派共和党人 worked to change the balance of power between Congress and the presidency and to reshape southern society, through the Freedmen's Bureau, military occupation, and new state constitutions.

AMENDMENT	WHAT IT GUARANTEED	HOW IT STOPPED WORKING
13th 1865	slavery abolished	convict labour and debt peonage rebuild forced labour
14th 1868	citizenship and equal protection of the laws	read narrowly by the courts; "separate but equal" in 1896
15th 1870	the vote, regardless of race	poll taxes, literacy tests and violence, none of them written as racial

None of the three was **repealed**. Reconstruction failed through **enforcement**, which is why the essay question is about power, not about the text of the amendments

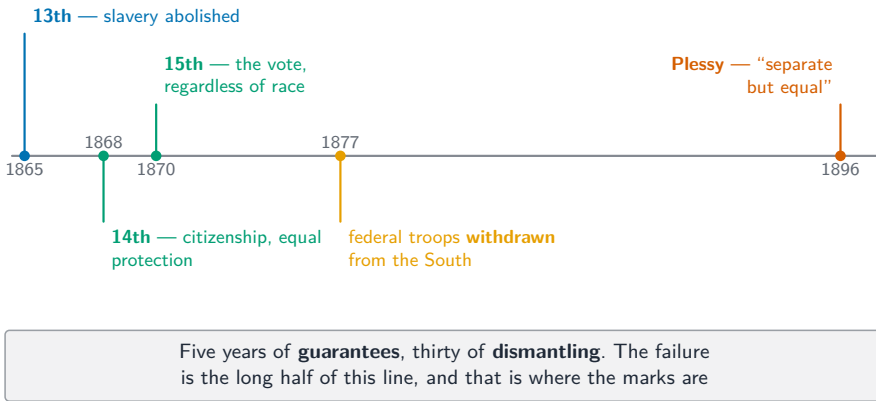
The Failure of Reconstruction

Reconstruction's gains were reversed, and the exam expects the mechanisms, not just the outcome.

Southern plantation owners **continued to own most of the region's land** even after emancipation, so formerly enslaved people entered arrangements such as **share-**

cropping 分成租佃 that produced dependence and debt rather than economic independence.

Then **segregation** 种族隔离, **violence** 暴力, unfavourable **Supreme Court decisions** 最高法院判决, and local political tactics progressively **stripped away** 逐步剥夺 the rights African Americans had gained. The result was a legal and social system that persisted into the twentieth century.



Comparison in Period 5

The period's reasoning skill is **comparison**. Useful comparisons: the North and South before the war; the aims of Reconstruction against its outcomes; and the status of African Americans in 1865 against 1877.

Worked example (a real AP exam question). The 2023 exam set the long essay "Evaluate the extent to which the definitions of United States citizenship changed from 1865 to 1920." A strong thesis takes a position and acknowledges the reversal: "Definitions of citizenship changed substantially between 1865 and 1920, as the 14th and 15th Amendments established birthright citizenship and prohibited racial barriers to voting; however, segregation, violence and Supreme Court decisions made those definitions far less meaningful in practice for African Americans by 1900." Notice the shape: for a period that both expanded and reversed rights, a thesis must hold the **legal change** and the **practical reversal** together. Writing only about the amendments describes half the period.

Exam tips

- Expansion is the **cause** of the sectional crisis. Every compromise from 1850 onwards is an attempt to answer whether slavery could expand.
- Name the mechanism, not the mood. “Tensions rose” earns nothing; the **Fugitive Slave Act**, **Dred Scott**, and **Bleeding Kansas** do.
- Give the **Emancipation Proclamation** its strategic role: it redefined the war’s purpose and enabled Black enlistment.
- Learn the three **Reconstruction Amendments** by what each one does; questions often turn on the difference between them.
- For Reconstruction’s failure, name **sharecropping**, **segregation**, **violence**, and **Court decisions** - the four mechanisms.
- On comparison prompts, develop **both** sides. An answer that treats one side in a clause has answered half the question.